

HANDOUT CRV-1

HINTS FOR DEALING WITH CRAVINGS

TRY TO REMEMBER:

- Cravings are undesirable but are a natural part of the change process — many people experience cravings but the trick is to actively deal with your cravings.
- The source of cravings is part of the T-A-C model — many cravings are due to psychological factors (e.g., people, places, thoughts, feelings, times).
- Identify the triggers that are likely to lead to cravings for you.
- Do not think about cravings as being controlled by physical sensations alone.
- Detach yourself from the craving by making sure that you don't identify with the craving (they are something you experience and not something you are part of).

PRACTICAL TIPS AND TECHNIQUES:

- **Use Imagery:** Think of the craving as if you are riding a wave. When the craving is intense, the wave is moving up. But it will move down again, and the craving will be less intense then.
- **Try Thought Stopping:** Think of a stop sign in your head to end the craving.
- **Distract Yourself:** Simply leave the scene or do something else.
- **Use Substitutes:** Substitute another behavior (like eating something).
- **Use Coping by Thinking:** To look past the temptation of the immediate gratification.
- **Seek Help:** Talk about your craving with someone who supports you, and whom you trust.
- **Don't Play with the Craving** by thinking about the positive benefits of use. Instead, actively cope by using techniques you've learned work for you.
- **Create as Safe an Environment** as possible to avoid cravings and to deal with cravings when they take place.
- **Remember to Have a Plan:** Rehearse the plan, keep improving your plan to have confidence that it works.

HANDOUT CRV-2

URGE SURFING EXERCISE

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1.** Use your imagination to think about how you experience a craving. The sensations you are about to experience will differ depending on whether you select food, cigarettes or coffee as your example. Try to use a simple example such as one of your favorite foods, a cigarette, or a cup of coffee. Make sure you are sitting comfortably with your feet flat on the floor and your hands in a comfortable position. Take a few deep breaths to focus your attention inward. Notice where in your body you experience the sensation of the craving and what the sensation is like. Notice each part of your body involved in experiencing the urge, and tell yourself (in your head), what you are experiencing. For example, "My craving started in my mouth and nose and moved to my stomach."
- 2.** Notice the exact sensation in the area you are experiencing the craving. For example, do you feel hot, cold, tingly, or numb? Are your muscles tense or relaxed? Notice any changes that happen with the sensation. For example, My mouth feels dry and I'm thirsty. There is tension in my lips and tongue. I am trying to swallow a lot. As I exhale, I can imagine the smell of hot coffee on a cold day. If you are using food or cigarettes think about the sensations associated with eating your favorite food or smoking your favorite brand of smokes.
- 3.** Keep focusing on each part of the body that is experiencing the craving. Describe to yourself the changes in sensation that take place. NOTICE how the urge comes and goes. Many people, when they Urge Surf, notice that after a few minutes the craving vanishes. The purpose of this exercise is not to make cravings vanish but for you to experience cravings in a new way. If you practice Urge Surfing, you will become familiar with your cravings and learn how "to ride them out."

Source: Ronald Kadden, et al. (1994), *Cognitive Behavioral Coping Skills Therapy Manual*. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism: Project Match Monograph Series, Volume 3, Rockville, Maryland.

HANDOUT CRV-3

JAMIE'S APARTMENT

SITUATION

Jamie lives in a high-rise apartment in downtown Boston that looks directly down on a busy street. Jamie is a bit embarrassed about his craving because some people might think it sounds a bit strange. For 10 years, Jamie was a daily cocaine user. He never free-based or did injection, he was only into snorting lines of coke that he carefully lined up on his coffee table. Jamie did most of his drugs alone — in fact Jamie still considers himself as a loner given that he spends most of his time alone in his apartment.

After a full six months of quitting, Jamie found himself in an awkward situation. During a major snowstorm he gazed at the snowploughs 15 stories below as they continued to push snow up against a large bank. The snow was piled up row after row before it led into one large bank. Jamie found himself experiencing an incredible urge to snort cocaine as he gazed down on the street.

Why? Jamie felt that the rows of snow bore a striking resemblance to lines of cocaine he had cut for years on his coffee table. The fact that the “snow” outside was much larger than his old lines of cocaine did not matter. The snow was a real trigger for Jamie.

INSTRUCTIONS

Develop a list of recommendations about how Jamie might handle this situation. Refer to Handout CRV-1: Hints for Dealing with Cravings. Be prepared to brief the other group on your recommendations.

HANDOUT CRV-4

CHRIS'S FAVORITE TUNES

SITUATION

Chris is a 23 year old who is on probation in the Machias area. Chris stopped smoking hash over two years ago and is confident that he can now handle any situation without using. Chris is happy with his decision to not use given that his best friend also decided to stop using around two years ago. Chris has also received a great deal of support from his family and relatives who understand what has gone on in the past.

Chris is a huge fan of Pink Floyd and when he used to smoke dope he always seemed to be listening to "Dark Side of the Moon" or the "Wall." Chris's old girlfriend Joanne keeps bumping into him lately. Recently, Joanne invited Chris over to her girlfriend's apartment and he agreed. It was a surprise to Chris when the two women were smoking drugs. They were playing Pink Floyd all evening. To his surprise, Chris found himself craving a toke as he heard all of his favorite tunes that evening and could smell the hash in the air. Chris asked himself "How can this be happening? I haven't even touched anything for over two years."

INSTRUCTIONS

Develop a list of recommendations about how Chris might handle this situation. Make sure you consider CRV-1: Hints for Dealing with Cravings. Be prepared to brief the other group on your recommendations.

WORKSHEET CRV-5

COPING WITH CRAVINGS PLAN

INSTRUCTIONS

Triggers — Column 1

List all of the triggers that you've associated with your cravings in the past. (For example, you might crave cocaine when you visit old drug-using friends. That's one trigger. Your craving may increase as your friends discuss the quality of the cocaine and how they plan to use — that could be your second trigger). List two to three triggers and provide as much detail as possible.

Actions — Column 2

The Actions column is divided into two. In the left-hand side list all the things you can THINK to help deal with your cravings (like thought-stopping, for example). In the right-hand side list all the things you can DO to deal with your cravings (like seeking the support of friends, for example). You can refer to Handout CRV-1: Hints for Dealing with Cravings for ideas when working on this part of your chart.

Consequences — Column 3

List all of the positive and negative consequences you think are likely as a result of the Actions you've identified.



TRIGGERS What risk situations (people, places, things, emotions, thoughts, smells) trigger your cravings?	ACTIONS What actions do you plan to take to cope with your cravings?		CONSEQUENCES	
	Thinking Skills you plan to use	Things You Can Do	+	-